MIDDLE SCHOOL TIPS FOR SUCCESS

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EARLY ADOLESCENCE 101

Physical, Brain, Cognitive, Emotional, Moral Changes

PHYSICAL CHANGES

Boys and girls go through a major growth spurt in middle school

- Eat and Sleep more because of these changes
- May seem nervous/ twitchy- need for movement – may have growing pains and need to move for relief

Boys and Girls bodies start to transition toward adult body characteristics

- This can cause stress for “early” or “late bloomers”
- This happens at different rates and individual paces which may cause self- awareness and self-esteem issues

BRAIN CHANGES

Period of great brain plasticity- lots of changes going on during this time

Pre-frontal cortex (think "ceo" of the brain) is not fully developed. This affects:

- Planning
- Prioritizing
- Focusing attention
- Organizing thoughts & problem solving
- Making judgments
- Impulse control/ understanding consequences

BRAIN CHANGES

- Emotional center is swollen at this time causing emotion to override judgment and decision making skills.

- Neural “pruning” occurs for unused synapsis connections.
  - Think of “use it or lose it” why it is important to encourage your child to try new things, explore interests, etc.

- Most of the brain changes at this time focus on emotion, arousal and motivation, and appetite and sleep patterns.

FRONTAL LOBE/ PRE-FRONTAL CORTEX

CEO of the brain

Organizing, Prioritizing, Risk Taking, Cause & Effect (consequences), Impulsive Behavior, Working Memory

Girls

- Matures earlier in girls which may explain less risk taking
- Less impulsive and can sit still longer

Boys

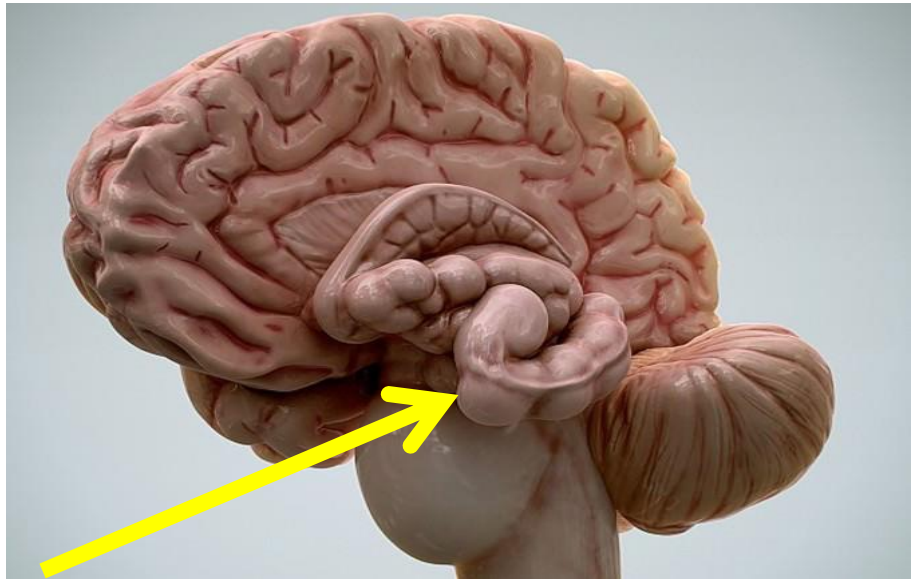
- Matures late twenties to thirties
- More impulsive
- One reason why boys are more prone to be diagnosed with learning disabilities and conduct orders

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

- The amygdala is the emotional gatekeeper. It is larger in males, and it has many testosterone receptors which stimulate and heighten response to anger.
- he hippocampus is responsible for memory storage, and especially working memory. It is the hub for both memory and emotion. It is larger in females. The number and speed of neuron transmissions are higher in females.

AMYGDALA

Processes emotional events and memories



Girls

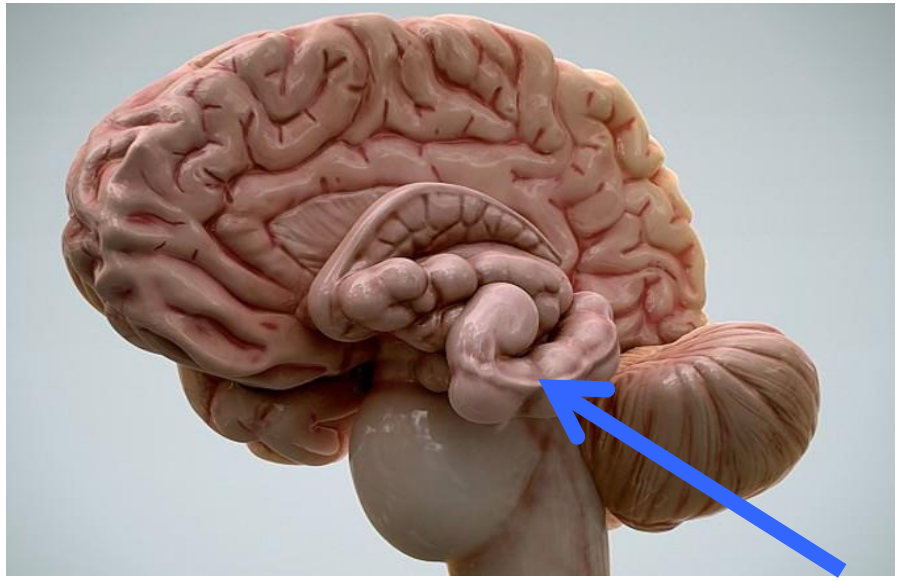
- Quicker verbal response (feelings into words) blood flows upward to the cerebral cortex
- Swollen amygdala will stop working memory- no learning will occur.
- Need to address (water, dump it, check in)

Boys

- Quicker physical response (fight or flight) blood flows downward to the cerebellum/ brainstem
- Swollen amygdala will cause fight or flight or throwing things provide movement, water, and walk and talk

HIPPOCAMPUS

Memory Storage- is essential to creating meaning



Girls

- Have a larger hippocampus than males.
- The number and speed of neuron transmissions in it is higher in females, as is the blood flow. Thus girls attach more feelings to memories than boys do. There is a lot more going on in the hidden world of female memory

Boys

- Boys have more difficulty following multi-step directions. They need more reminding than girls do.
- Takes longer for information to be processes from working to long term memory (1 day- 3 weeks)

EMOTIONAL CHANGES

- Amygdala is swollen cause all kinds of emotional turmoil for your child
  - Emotions overrule judgment
  - In boys- fight or flight response intensifies
  - “end of the world”
- Self esteem issues come about from their body image , the need to find their identity, and the need to fit in
- Want the support of the family but also want their own identity- emotionally draining

COGNITIVE CHANGES

- Moves from only concrete thinking to more abstract thinking, including hypothetical thinking
  - *Concrete thinking is yes/ no or black/ white- get frustrated with questions that could have multiple answers*
  - Do not have to see and feel something to understand it
  - Can start to do more problem solving and complex work
  - Can start to see another perspective
- Concentrates on self and other's perceptions of self
- Engages an "imaginary audience," a mental idea of others watching
- Particular intelligence strengths become evident (linguistic, mathematical, interpersonal, musical)

SOCIAL CHANGES

- ✓ Social relationships with peers are very important
- ✓ Acceptance with peers is often important—may seek “similar” peers as a means of affirming self; they want to fit in with a group
- ✓ Explores identities- may go through different phases trying to figure out who they are
- ✓ May enact racial/ethnic/gender stereotypes as part of the process of developing their own identity
- ✓ Expresses criticism of self and others

MORAL CHANGES

- Demonstrates interest in ethics of care and justice
- Starts to develop a sense of social justice/ moral consciousness
- Respects social order, although sometimes challenges it as well
- Learns how to put ethics of justice into action through community service

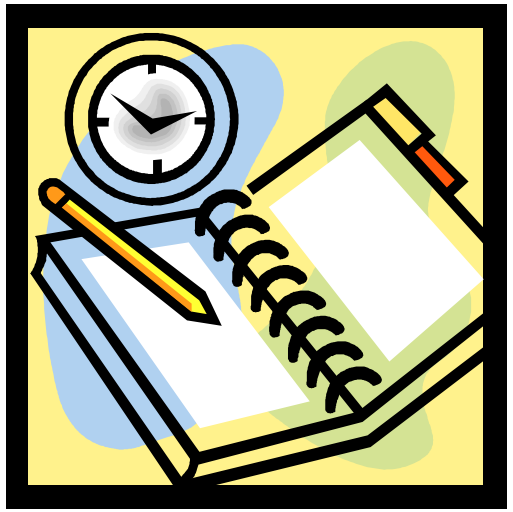
ORGANIZATION

Tools of Organization

TOOL NUMBER ONE: MIDDLE SCHOOL BINDER

- One three inch binder or 2 2 ½” binders *(check with the school)*
- One spiral notebook for each subject
- One two-pocket folder for each subject
- Color code classes
  - Green – Math,
  - Red – Reading
  - Blue – Language Arts
  - Yellow – World History
  - Orange - Science

TOOL NUMBER TWO: STUDENT PLANNER



- Record homework assignments
- Record major project due dates
- Record test
- Use abbreviations
  - r- read, qz-quiz, pp.-pages, hw-homework, etc.
- Check planner at least once a week with your child

TOOL NUMBER THREE: LOCKER

- Identify key locker times in schedule
  - Help you child identify these time during Open House
- Use locker shelf, divider, etc.
- Practice opening lock at home
  - Opening a combination lock
    - Turn to right, stop on the first number
    - Turn to the left, pass the second number once, stop on it the second time around
    - Turn to the right, stop on the third number

TOOL NUMBER FOUR: BACKPACK

- Make sure straps are the proper level in order to have weight on upper back, not lower back.
- Find out what books can be left at home or used online to lighten the load.
- Schedule regular backpack clean outs (twice a month).
- Consider using binder backpack.
- Check out school rules in regards to backpack on wheels.

TOOL NUMBER FIVE: OPEN HOUSE

- Walk the schedule in order
- Find which books can be used online, on cd, or checkout and left at home for the year
- Find out your Edsby parent password
- Find out teachers' email addresses
- First name.last name @sdhc.k12.fl.us
- Identify 2-3 locker times
  - Before homeroom, mid-day, after school

TOOL NUMBER SIX: CONFERENCE NIGHTS

- Meet with your child's teachers to discuss:
  - Your child's academic progress
  - Any concerns you may have
  - Ways to help your support your child at home
- Find which books can be used online, on cd, or checkout and left at home for the year
- Find out your Edsby parent password
- Check on the organization of your child's locker

PROMOTION POLICIES

For Middle School

PROMOTION POLICY

In an effort to prepare middle school students for high school we are moving away from the quality point system used for course credit to a semester average based on grades earned each quarter along with the semester exam. This letter contains important information regarding the grading procedures for middle school courses.

- All middle school courses require either a semester exam or state End of Course (EOC) exam.
- The 9 weeks grades and the semester exam grades will appear separately on the Progress Report (Report Card).
- To pass a semester course a student must earn a minimum of a D average for the semester grade and must pass at least one 9 weeks.
- The semester grade is determined by averaging both 9 weeks grades **and** the semester exam. Grades are calculated using each 9 weeks grade and the semester exam grade based on the designated weights below. The weights of middle school semester exams depend upon the course level and range from 15% to 30%.

Course Level	**Exam Weight**
Grade 6	15%
Grade 7	20%
Grade 8	25%
End of Course (EOC) Exam (Algebra, Geometry and Civics)	30%

All middle school students must pass language arts, math, science, and social studies in order to be promoted to the next grade.

Middle School Final Semester Grade Calculations Based on Exam Weight					
9 Week Grade Combinations	6th grade Exam Grade 15%	7th Grade Exam Grade 20%	8th Grade Exam Grade 25%	EOC Course Exam Grade 30%	Semester Grade
A, A	A, B, C, D	A, B, C	A, B, C	A, B	A
A, A	F	D, F	D, F	C, D, F	B
A, B	A	A	A	A	A
A, B	B,C, D, F	B, C, D, F	B, C, D, F	B, C, D	B
A, B				F	C
A, C	A, B, C, D, F	A, B C, D	A, B, C, D	A, B, C	B
A, C		F	F	D, F	C
A, D	A, B	A, B	A, B	A, B	B
A, D	C, D, F	C, D, F	C, D, F	C, D, F	C
A, F			A	A	B
A, F	A, B, C, D, F	A, B, C, D, F	B, C, D, F	B, C, D	C
A, F				F	D
B, B	A, B, C, D, F	A, B, C, D	A, B, C, D	A, B, C	B
B, B		F	F	D, F	C
B, C	A, B	A, B	A, B	A, B	B
B, C	C, D, F	C, D, F	C, D, F	C, D, F	C
B, D			A	A	B
B, D	A, B, C, D, F	A, B, C, D, F	B, C, D, F	B, C, D	C
B, D				F	D
B, F	A, B, C	A, B, C	A, B, C	A, B, C	C
B, F	D	D	D	D	D

Middle School Final Semester Grade Calculations Based on Exam Weight					
9 Week Grade Combinations	6th grade Exam Grade 15%	7th Grade Exam Grade 20%	8th Grade Exam Grade 25%	EOC Course Exam Grade 30%	Semester Grade
C, C			A	A	B
C, C	A, B, C, D, F	A, B, C, D, F	B, C, D, F	B, C, D	C
C, C				F	D
C, D	A, B, C	A, B, C	A, B, C	A, B, C	C
C, D	D, F	D, F	D, F	D, F	D
C, F		A	A, B	A, B	C
C, F	A, B, C, D, F	B, C, D, F	C, D, F	C, D, F	D
D, D		A	A, B	A, B	C
D, D	A, B, C, D, F	B, C, D, F	C, D, F	C, D, F	D
D, F				A	C
D, F	A, B, C, D	A, B, C, D	A, B, C, D	B, C, D	D
D, F	F	F	F	F	F
F, F	A, B, C, D, F	A, B, C, D, F	A, B, C, D, F	A, B, C, D, F	F

MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

Criteria

WHAT IS USED IN THE SELECTION PROCESS

- ✓Standardized test scores from 6th and 7th grades (better of the two) for reading and math.

- ✓Grades in core courses from 7th grade and the first semester of 8th grade

- ✓Writing sample
  - ✓Current HCPS students: the District Writing Formative Assessment is in November and this score counts as the Magnet Writing sample score
  - ✓Students who attend charter, private and non-HCPS schools or are home-schooled must attend a Writing Session.

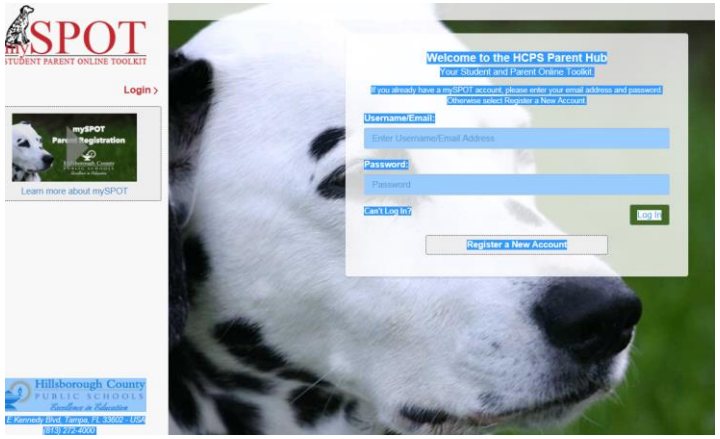
- ✓**For more information, contact the Choice Information Line at 813.272.4692.**

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Available Resources

MY SPOT

HTTP://MYSPOT.SDHC.K12.FL.US



- Quick access to key district resources and links.
- Connects parents to a single "Hub" of information that supports a child's academic achievement and social growth.
- Easily navigate through what's important when it comes to the progress of your child.

EDSBY

- See all your kids in one place
- Edsby shows you how each child is doing
- Edsby lets you see each child's school calendar
- Edsby watches for important activity
- Edsby helps you contact a teacher or the office
- Edsby keeps you up to date on school news

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE:

- Provide an environment at home that encourages learning and school activities.
- Encourage participation in extra-curricular activities.
- Volunteer in your school.
- Help your child get organized.
- Attend school events.
- Keep in touch with the school and your child's teachers
- Make sure your child takes classes that are needed to attend college.

QUESTIONS/ CONCERNS?

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